

2013 Year of Opportunity

Posted At : January 1, 2013 4:46 PM | Posted By : AMZ

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Forget what you read in the papers and see on the news. Here at AZtech we believe that 2013 is the Year of Opportunity. Why do we say that?

One reason is that 2012, the year of political melodrama, is over. We don't have to guess who will win the presidency and what will happen as a result. We know who won and no matter how we feel about him, we're all clear on what that means, both the good and bad, for the next four years. The Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare) survived the Supreme Court. We don't have to wonder if it will and what it will mean. Now we can implement strategies to deal with it. Regardless of how it all works out, the spectacle of the fiscal cliff is ending. It doesn't much matter if we go over it or not, life will go on. The hullabaloo over it all will be over and we'll all deal with whatever comes our way. It's not like we can do anything about it anyway. It's two years before the next election. All of which means, much of the uncertainty that plagued us this past year is over.

We may not like all the answers, but we have them, and that is a good thing. Now we can all let out the collective breath we've been holding and move on. That's the great thing about our businesses, forward movement is inherent to our nature.

But the real reason why we believe 2013 is the Year of Opportunity is that, for the first time in quite a while, our clients have turned their focus toward their customers. Over the last several years the focus has been internal. Although many talked about growth, they spent most of their time looking for places to cut. By now, most have cut all they can. All are tired of cutting. Now they are asking: how can we improve our relationships with our customers and target markets so we can all grow? There is renewed focus on collaboration with partners and suppliers. Businesses of all sizes are acknowledging that their success is concatenated to their communities.

The question is how to transform from an internal to an externally focused organization? Most believe it requires a cultural shift that they are ill suited to execute. The good news is it is easier than most think. All it really takes is encouraging every functional group to get out of the office to talk to customers, suppliers, business partners and the communities and markets within which the business operates. At the same time, invite customers, suppliers, business partners and representatives for the community into the office. The key is to extend all conversations to include outsiders. Just hearing these outsider points of view from their sources (vs market analyst reports) will start a cultural shift that will take on its own momentum.

So who are you going to go meet this week?